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12 June 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: DEPUTY CHIEF, POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

SUBJECT: Current problems in the BQFIEND/VALUABLE relationship.

REFERENCE: Memorandum for File, dtd 4 June 1953, prepared by [redacted]

1. As requested in paragraph 4 of reference, SE division submits herewith a resume of certain recent developments in the BQFIEND/VALUABLE joint Albanian operation which may be a subject of discussion during the forthcoming visit to London of DDP and OPP. A specific issue has arisen as the result of recent allegations made by the leaders of one of the parties in the National Committee for a Free Albania (Agrarian Party) against George Gegh, the present Administrative Secretary of the NCFA and member of the Legitimist Party, who cooperates closely with us. The Agrarian Party leaders demand Gegh's immediate dismissal. The British apparently take a serious view of the charges and seem prepared to support the demands of the Agrarian leaders with whom they maintain a favored relationship.

2. It would appear that more is involved than the question of whether or not Gegh, whose activities in this case were approved by our [redacted] should be retained in his present capacity. MI-6 may in fact seek to take advantage of the episode to strengthen its hold over the NCFA through the Agrarians by eliminating Gegh, whose loyalty to the U. S. representative is well known. It has been established that [redacted], our [redacted] with the NCFA, is himself a target of the Agrarian Party. The possibility exists that the British, too, may attempt to discredit him and thereby negate his efforts to curb the unwarranted influence of the Agrarians within the NCFA. In any case, the issue poses serious internal problems for the NCFA and could affect adversely the joint covert British-U. S. relationship with respect to Albania.

3. Highlights of the background follow:

a. From the beginning of his assignment [redacted] in January 1951, [redacted] has encountered continuous difficulties with the Agrarian leaders (including Hasan Dosti, NCFA President). This group has shown itself completely unwilling to subordinate its own party interests and program to the overriding requirements of emigre unity.

b. The leaders have consistently displayed a pro-British bias and a marked disinclination to cooperate sincerely with the American representative.

c. Specific

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c. Specific activities of the Agrarian leaders which SE division considers unfortunate or worse are their flat refusal to agree to any broadening of the NCFA along lines acceptable to us; attempts to sow discord in the Albanian Guard Company and refugee camps; their insistence on publishing in their own newspaper nationalistic attacks on Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia which are accepted in some quarters as NCFA policy; clandestine contacts with the Yugoslav-supported Priaren Committee of Albanian refugees, concerning which they have been less than frank with []

4. [] consequently, has had to intervene to bolster the influence of the other NCFA member parties. To keep informed on Agrarian activities, [] developed special relationships with a number of other committee members and particularly with George Gogh. Besides being Administrative Secretary of NCFA, Gogh is Secretary General of the Legitimist Party, which in theory has an equal voice in NCFA affairs. Gogh serves [] both in his official capacity and in maintaining a check on clandestine Agrarian activities.

5. Early this spring, convincing evidence was furnished by Gogh that Abas Ermeni, the strongest Agrarian leader, was having clandestine contacts with a British agent who is not officially associated with the NCFA in any way. This evidence, climaxing other less conclusive events, was sufficient to convince us that the British were in fact conducting a separate and irregular liaison with the Agrarian group.

6. Subsequently Abas Ermeni let it be known that he was taking a short trip to Paris. Suspecting that Ermeni might have dealings with British or other representatives in Paris and might even go to London, [] asked Gogh's assistance in arranging surveillance of Ermeni while there. This was done through a Legitimist follower in Rome who passed the actual surveillance assignment, by letter, to another supposedly-loyal party member in Paris. Unfortunately, the letter implicated Gogh directly, and [] by inference. On receipt of this letter, the Paris contact immediately showed it to Abas Ermeni, revealing everything he knew about the "plot".

7. Two days before [] scheduled departure to the United States for consultation and home leave, a delegation of Agrarian leaders presented him with a memorandum voicing the Agrarian Party's complaints against both [] and Gogh and demanding that Gogh be dismissed. The memorandum contained the text of the letter. Our representative stated, however that, although he would not intervene to prevent a "trial" of George Gogh, he would demand simultaneously that other members of the NCFA, and specifically the Agrarians, be called to account for numerous irregularities in their own conduct.

8. Twenty-four hours later [] was informed by the members of the deputation that they wished to withdraw their memorandum and hoped he would consider the matter "as it was before the memorandum had been submitted". [] was asked to keep the entire question confidential. [] the British liaison with the NCFA in Rome, was out of town and could not be reached, and our representative decided that the matter could rest until he returned from Washington.

9. However, two

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9. However, two days after [] departure and on the day of [] return, the same deputation presented their memorandum to [] London then cabled headquarters that, in the opinion of MI-6 [] should present his full account of the incident in London on his return journey to Rome.

10. Concurrently, in a series of exchanges between the MI-6 representative in Washington and Headquarters, earlier British proposals for an overall BGFIND/VALUABLE meeting, to which we had agreed in principle only, were renewed. Since we had been informed that both [] and [] of MI-6 felt that the situation vis-a-vis the NCFA was sufficiently serious to be handled on the Washington-London level, we concurred in the new proposal and suggested it be held in Washington on or about 8 June. London then cancelled the meeting on the grounds that "discussions concerning a single operation by a case officer" did not merit such extended travel—although, the agenda previously submitted by MI-6 and agreeable to us involved a variety of other matters of broad mutual interest.

11. Our most recent exchanges with the British have made it apparent that MI-6 greatly desired a joint policy decision on the matter before [] returned to Rome. We remain convinced, however, that the proper level on which to reach a decision is in the field and between the two [] liaison officers, who have all the relevant information at their disposal. We instructed [] therefore, not to report to London but to proceed directly to Rome. He is due there on 12 June. He was directed to seek settlement of the matter with his British counterpart; failing that, the affair was then to be referred to Headquarters for resolution at a Washington-London meeting.

12. This division is making every effort to prevent the present contretemps from reaching a stage sufficiently serious to endanger our U. S.-British relationship with respect to Albanian operations.

[]
Acting Chief, SE

SE/ACPP []
12 June 1953

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